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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON.

FACULTY OF MEDICINE.

DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES,

MONDAY, MAY 20TH, 1878.

MR. JOHN SIMON IN THE CHAIR.

MR. DEAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It is a great honour which the Council of the College have done me, who am not of this School, in their invitation that I should preside here on the present occasion; and I hope I may not seem to be unduly under its influence, nor may be unduly presuming on it, if, before turning to other matters, I venture to express my personal respect for the College, and my sense of the very valuable services which, during its half-century's existence, it has rendered to the cause of Medical Education, and to the progress of the Art and Science of Medicine. To young men studying in any such institution as this, few influences can be more important for present and future good, than that they feel themselves bound together by strong *esprit de corps*, and attached by ties of proud affection to the school which is training them; and I am glad to express my warm recognition of the grounds on which the medical students of University College may cherish associations of that sort. Not only no University College man, but no student of any school who is sensitive to the glories of the Profession, can pass through the lecture-rooms and laboratories of this College, and the wards of its Hospital, without gratefully remembering many who have taught here in these past fifty years of the College's existence, representative men of different sorts in so many different branches of science and practice. Waiving mention by name of any of the eminent persons still living, and in great part now sitting here, who constitute the present acting Professoriat of the College, or are of the class of its Emeriti Professors:

referring only to the honoured memories of those who have taught here, and have for ever passed away : who is there but will recall the names of Charles Bell, of Robert Liston, of Thomas Graham, each the marker of an epoch in his own province of subject-matter, and of Parkes, so lately taken from us, and so affectionately remembered here ?

And now, ladies and gentlemen, as regards the reports which have been made on the class-competitions of the College in the past year, it is my very agreeable duty to offer congratulations, not only my own, but I am sure I may say those of all the members and friends of the College who are here as spectators, to the students who have taken part in these competitions.

First, of course, I congratulate those who have succeeded in them. I congratulate them and their friends on the clear proof which their success gives, that they have used the opportunities of learning which have here been afforded them ; and I congratulate them on the promise which this success gives of further successes to be obtained hereafter, if like means be taken to secure them. For, in a school of this size, with its genuine competition, we may safely assume that no man gets a prize without having really worked for it ; and perseverance in real work is, I need not assure you, the best of all securities for future success. The prize-winner must of course remember that the present field of competition is not of identical nature with that in which the duties of practical life are exercised ;—that *here*, in far greater proportion than *there*, success may attach to the mere power of reproducing readily and completely things which have been learnt on authority ; that even mere word-readiness will sometimes count disproportionately in class-competitions ; whereas afterwards, where readiness and completeness of knowledge are to be practically applied in judgment and action, the mind is more truly tested as to the degree in which it has really digested information and experience to its own nourishment and uses. Subject to this caution, it may safely be said of every prize-winner, that, in showing that he can work harder or to more effect than his neighbours, he has given proof of qualities which, if he continues to exert them, must be of effect in his future career.

But, ladies and gentlemen, let us not have congratulations only for those who have succeeded in the competition ! Among those who have not succeeded, among those who either have quite failed, or at least hold in the prize-list some far lower place than they hoped to hold, there may be several who have done their best to succeed, have worked as hard as those who have won, though perhaps with less ability (either in a general sense or with regard to the particular character of the competition) or perhaps under some temporary difficulty of ill-health or other interrupting circumstance. And so far as any man has done his best, however unsuccessfully, let him at least be heartily congratulated on that endeavour. Successful and unsuccessful alike will do well to remember, that, while not all men are born with equal ability, nor all are equally favoured by circumstances, it is for sincere endeavours in life that each one of us is responsible, and that the true nobility of each life is to be measured less by its successes than by its aims. In the prize-competitions of our more deliberate years, it may be better to succeed imperfectly in high ambitions than to win more in ambitions which are relatively low. And in those maturer efforts we have to be on our guard, in a degree which student-

life can hardly know, that the essential success at which we aim as our final reward in life shall not be lost through over-anxiety to pick up petty prizes by the way. In student-life, where the proposed object is that proficiency in certain branches of knowledge shall be acquired by the student from his teacher, success in class-examinations is evidence of approach to the essential object, and each prize got in such examination is as it were a milestone passed in a race. But subsequent life is less simple. There every man whose work has a real purpose must carefully distinguish between accidental momentary triumphs, and those really important successes which are steps towards his final aim. He has to remember Milton's teaching, that prizes are only real as they are final. He knows, or ought to know, what intentions and purpose he has in life, what is the very goal which he hopes to reach, and the reaching of which shall be his prize. By that he has to govern himself. The secret for success in the race is never to lose sight of the goal: not attaching undue importance to the "brief dust and light, gathered around the chariots as they go;" but bearing in mind ever that favourite illustration of Lord Bacon's, of the golden apples which Meleager, racing with Atalanta, flung before her as she ran—"which while she stoopeth to gather up, lo, he passeth her in the race."

Now, considering the nature of the present occasion, considering that many of the young men who occupy the benches before me are sitting on them for the last time before passing into the world as Medical Practitioners, it may perhaps not be inappropriate that I invite THEM in particular to follow with me somewhat in detail the line of reflection which I have just suggested. Were I to ask any of them what object he has proposed to himself in entering upon the Medical Profession, he would I presume answer that his object (a very proper one) is to find livelihood for himself, and for those who are, or will be, dependent on him. That elementary duty of citizenship—the duty of self-support and family-support, has of course to be fulfilled by us all, and money has to be earned for the purpose: but money (more or less) may be earned in any one of a thousand different careers: and the question remains, why has the man pitched upon Medicine as the career in which to try his fortune in that respect? Probably the explanation is, that the career has presented itself to his mind in two quite distinct points of view: one, as promising him the money which he must have; the other, as promising to gratify certain tastes or ambitions which are in his mind, and to which I will presently again refer. The charm to him of the medical career has probably been that, in it, those two promises go together: but money in great excess beyond livelihood can hardly have been the motive of his choice. The man who enters our profession, with knowledge and character, may be sure that these will win him livelihood in every reasonable sense of the word: livelihood, which, subject only to the common accidents of life, will be steady and increasing, and will include, as time goes on, the means of properly providing for those, who, if his life is to be domestically complete, will be dependent on him: but the cases are few in which, financially speaking, his profits will be much beyond that point. He will probably never become what our modern society, luxurious and spendthrift as it is, counts "rich:" almost certainly not what it counts "very rich:" our Profession, we know, cannot be looked to as a career for the amassing of great stores

of wealth. The indifference with which this fact is regarded by thousands of very able men who are enthusiastically at work in our Profession, though in an age of the world when riches are in extreme popular estimation, seems most decisively to say that the strongest attractions to a medical career, do not consist in its pecuniary prospects, but in its power of satisfying some far higher ambition than that which has mere money-making for its object. It is, I think, not difficult in regard of our Profession, to get at the exact root and explanation of that attractiveness; and an attempt on my part to do so may perhaps assist some of my young friends to settle in their own minds what shall be the true and final prizes which they will seek as the reward of their professional life.

If we contemplate as physiologists the working of human minds of the best sort in relation to the system of things in which they operate, we see (I think) that, so soon as there needs be no further immediate care for means of subsistence or self-defence, the chief activities of each person are determined by one or both of the following motive powers. One is the *thirst for knowledge*; in virtue of which every man who is above the level of a cretin finds pleasure in the exercise of his own intellect as in the exercise (in early life) of his own muscles; so that men of intellect, under stimulus of this appetite, pursue science for its own sake, irrespectively of hire or compulsion. And the other is that strong *desire for the affection of our kind*, which leads the best men to find their own best happiness in giving help and happiness to their fellow-men. The Medical Profession has its attractiveness in its unequalled power of ministering to those two governing appetites of the higher human mind. It deeply interests the best faculties of the best men; and thus the practice of medicine, in proportion as men are worthy to exercise it, becomes dearer and dearer to the man as he grows old in it, and as he learns more and more from experience how continued an education it is, if he will so use it, of all that is highest and kindest in his nature.

There is no rank of the Medical Profession without its share in those sources of intellectual and moral enjoyment. To some men it will be more in one form, to some men more in another; but there is no employed doctor who may not every day of his life be conscious of growing more and more of a man, and a happy man, as he fulfils the duties of his profession. Look at even the humblest routine of practice, as illustrated (say) in some obscure country district, in the life of a man who perhaps has few or no wealthy patients on his visiting-list, but is distinctively the doctor of the poor. Compare the man who in that medical capacity is earning (say) two or three hundred a year with a man who earns the same amount as clerk in a bank or government-office. Think of the higher faculties which he is called upon to use, morally and intellectually, even in his routine work, and of the happiness which, in proportion to his merits in those two respects, accrues to him more and more in his daily work: on the one hand the intellectual pleasure of getting more and more skill in the practical problems of diagnosis and treatment; on the other hand, the moral gratification of feeling himself a source of usefulness and comfort to fellow-men weaker than himself, of feeling himself regarded by them with affection, of feeling that other human faces brighten with gladness at his coming. "Small service is true service while it lasts." Gentlemen, I am very proud of my Profession; but nothing in it, not even its greatest

scientific achievements, fills me with more pride than the thousands of cases in which its unostentatious merits are illustrated. Probably many of you know by heart the exquisite verscs in which Goldsmith more than a century ago pictured the modest noble life of the Village Pastor ; and I will venture to say that the sweetest touches of that picture tell with equal fidelity the lives of thousands of our brethren. Believe me, there is no department of our practice, from the house-surgeonship of the Hospital to the rank of Sir William Jenner, which has not in its daily work the elements of a high happiness.

But, if that be true of Medicine in the narrowest field of its operations, how much more may be said of it in the largest ! Think of it, gentlemen, in its scientific strivings of all sorts and degrees, speculative and practical ; think of the illimitable intellectual pleasures of a science which is illimitable ; think of the illimitable moral pleasure of extending a science which at every step of its extension becomes more and more a blessing to the earth and its inhabitants. And here, for the moment, do not look too technically at the question of a Medical Profession as constituted by Act of Parliament, but think of the *Ars Medendi* in that larger sense in which Lord Bacon thought of it, as covering the whole field of Nature ; and think, in relation to the omnipresence of physical evil, what problems, not of cure only, but of prevention, are given to us medical practitioners to solve ! Modern Science, in its various sections of astronomy and geology and zoology, tells us of "struggles for existence" on the earth which we inhabit, and of man's past and present relation to such "struggles." It tells of creation in progress, of an evolutionary scheme of government advancing from day to day under conditions in which man, besides "struggling" for himself, is permitted to feel himself "struggling" also for other denizens of the world which he inhabits. For verily, as Bacon says, the students of the physical and biological sciences are also the *servants* of nature : able, as they learn her laws, to forward her scheme,—to control and to convert to her higher uses the otherwise hostile forces of her inanimate reign,—to help life in its "struggle" against those brute hostilities,—to help the higher life in its struggle against the lower :—and in this wider cosmical view, the *Ars Medendi* is coextensive with the whole field of terrestrial Nature. To draw help instead of disaster from the succession of seasons, the difference of climates, the play of elemental forces,—to contribute to the better culture and better utilization of the earth, so that it shall be more habitable for life, and especially for the largest quantity of the highest life,—in short, to promote and foster LIFE in such balance of quantity and quality as may yield on this globe of ours the largest total of self-conscious welfare,—this, all, is Medicine as Bacon would have used the term ; and if it has, as no doubt it has, *man* for its chief ultimate object, this is because hitherto *man* is "earth's paramount creature." In that vast field of Universal Medicine in which man is permitted to become, however humbly and molecularly, a servant in the system of Nature, we, who are doctors in the narrower sense, do not pretend to be the only workers. We have fellow-labourers (even if sometimes not knowing themselves as such) among all true students of the Natural Sciences, though not technically of our Profession ; and we may hail them as comrades under a common banner. Let me, however, with pride for our Profession, remind you that, even to the outskirts of that vast territory,

and far beyond what may be called our distinctive province, the actual work of members of our Profession, and the influence of their example and the stimulus of their studies, have been productive of very great results;—that, for instance, Lichig who created scientific agriculture, and Snow Harris who taught the nations of the world how to defend their ships and their buildings from lightning-stroke, were, in the technical sense, members of our Profession; and that Davy, to whom miners owe their safety-lamp, was at least an apprentice of our craft. And is it not something for us all to remember, that Edward Jenner, whose one discovery of vaccination has probably in the last eighty years saved to the world more human lives than all the national wars and the tyrannies and cruelties of the same period have extinguished, was but an English village doctor: a man probably fashioned in some sort as we all are; a man who was susceptible of delight from every sound and every colour of the spring-time; but who went about his quiet rural duties with an eye for the secrets, as well as the beauties, of Nature.

Gentlemen, each of you will instinctively feel that, if our Profession has such scope and opportunities as I describe, the responsibilities of each man entering it must be very great, and that no good man would choose to remain inefficient in it. It would carry me far beyond the limits of this occasion if I pretended to give more than a very few words to what I regard as the conditions of efficiency in a medical career. When I think of the man who is to be a doctor, I assume average intelligence and education, and average health of mind and body. As regards *professional* education he should of course be educated up to the standard of his day: for he cannot honestly sell to the public a service which is below that standard, any more than the draper or the grocer can honestly sell calico or sugar with false yard-measure or false pound-weight. As regards *general* education, the more of it that he has in quantity, provided that the quality be good, the better it will of course be for him: but the quality is of more importance than the quantity; and I know of no better test of the quality (as opposed to the mere quantity) of general education, than that a man should be well able to recognize in himself the limits between what he knows and what he does not know. His general education ought above all to have thoroughly taught him the meaning and the supreme importance of *accuracy* in every observation or statement which purports to be for the uses of science,—that, in science, slovenly observation and loose statement are almost equivalent to falsehood,—that to *see* rightly and completely what one pretends to see, to *hear* rightly and completely what one pretends to hear, to *describe* rightly and completely what one pretends to describe, is a better introduction to our special work than any number of the “ologies” without an educated sense of accuracy. As regards *health of mind and body*, it were well that every man entering on our Profession should be sufficiently vigorous in body and mind to be able without detriment to enjoy the active exercise of both. Yet, as regards that combination of endowments, I would not refrain from acknowledging (what indeed the recent memory of Parkes may serve to illustrate) that, many and many a time in the ranks of our Profession, we have seen the greater energy of the mind more than compensate for the frailness of the body; and it may almost humiliate the men of happier physical constitution to think what great services have been rendered by men of

broken-health,—by men, in many cases, whose poor physical lives have altogether fallen away from them, while their strenuous souls were still full of the happiness of labour.

Now, in the physical and intellectual qualifications which I have mentioned, the man has a certain outfit. There is his stock in trade. But to complete the making of the doctor, the finishing touch has yet to come. I have spoken of his stock in “trade;” and “trade,” in a certain sense, we may call it; but Medicine (if we call it a trade) is at least a trade and something more: it is one of those forms of commerce which distinctively call themselves “Liberal Professions.” When the practitioners of any industry which is practised for gain separate themselves from the common trading community by taking to themselves that distinctive term, they in substance pledge themselves to the public and to one another, that, acting together as a Brotherhood for the sake of public objects, they collectively recognize obligations of honour and duty beyond those which govern the common market-place; they profess, in effect, that, under their collective law of honour, they give more service than they are paid for giving. Every man who enters any “liberal” profession, and is ready to accept credit from that connexion, implicitly pledges himself that his character and conduct shall be contributory in due proportion to the sum total of his Profession’s “liberality,” that he will practice his commerce in subordination to those moral laws by which the “liberality” of his Profession is defined. I do not pause to consider how far the other Professions which are now called “liberal” fulfil the meaning of the term; but as regards the Medical Profession, I have no hesitation in saying that, in its search for knowledge, and in its helpfulness to man, it practises the liberality which it professes. And thus it is that in our Brotherhood, it may be claimed of each of us, according to his means, that, in disinterested work for science, and in disinterested helpfulness to man, he shall contribute to the Profession’s common service. Here perhaps may be seen, why I thought it necessary to recognize in starting that our Profession cannot be recommended to choice as a contrivance for the amassing of riches: but here I think is also to be seen one of those high characteristics of our calling, which probably, on full consideration of both sides of the balance, determined most of the gentlemen whom I see here to make it the Profession of their choice.

When I refer to these perhaps trite considerations about the constitution of our Profession,—when I remind you that we profess to regard the common objects of the Profession as entitled to self-sacrifice at our hands,—when I remind you that we profess to regard one another, not as rivals and competitors against whom we would gain victories, or with whom we would invidiously compare ourselves, but as fellow-soldiers under a common flag, cooperators for a common object,—it scarcely can be requisite to say that the whole theory of the Medical Profession in those respects assumes that its members have *moral*, as well as *technical* qualifications. Similarly, if I refer to the more purely scientific relations of our Profession, to the absolute devotion to truth which it ought to exhibit, and of truth for truth’s own sake,—if I think not only what disdain of pretensions and tricks and clap-traps this involves, but what patience of study, what moderation of argument, what superiority to mere “victories of wit and contradiction,” again I see that the *moral* qualifications are essential. Not least,

if I refer to the relations of close personal intimacy in which members of our Profession have to stand to the privacies and sanctities of other men's domestic life, to the unlimited trust of all sorts which is placed in them, to the weaknesses—often the wickednesses which become known to them, to the temptations and ordeals of many kinds which they may have to undergo, to the scenes of suffering and sorrow, of mortal anguish, of abandonment and despair, at which they have to be present, and sometimes with no power of healing, but in which they may be the only human stay for their fellow-creatures; and all this in relation to high and low and rich and poor; I again see the imperative necessity for high *moral* qualifications in the Profession. One may indeed here apply to the question of medical efficiency the language in which an eminent Greek writer speaks of the constitution of a poet:—"the virtue of the poet is in such relation to the virtue of the man, that none will be excellent poet except so far as he is excellent man;" and I think you will find in that principle, *mutatis mutandis*, something to govern everything which can be said about means for attaining true success in the Medical Profession. It cannot be necessary for me to discuss in much detail what are the moral characteristics which complete a medical qualification; but if, bethinking me of the men whom I have most respected in our Profession, I could put their picture before you as my type of what in moral respects a member of our Profession should be, you would see, in very simple guise, a man of clean and honest heart,—a man, in whom the common virile virtues of courage and constancy are combined with the highest degree of sensibility to the rights and feelings of others,—a man, who, either by nature or by the strong self-discipline which is a second nature, is to the inmost core of his being (in the words of the Douglas motto) "tender and true,"—a man, whose whole life responds to the claims of honour and duty, and who will never falter at any self-sacrifice which honour or duty requires of him. For the details of any such picture, one short English word may be substituted: a word which is often used in a merely conventional sense, and is to this extent apt to lose its force, but which still, fortunately for us all, is not yet out of use in its proper and emphatic sense: and availing myself of that word in the most emphatic sense of which it is capable, I may sum up in it the moral qualifications which the finished doctor must have, by saying that the doctor must be a GENTLEMAN. And for the more felicitous practice of our profession, let him be one in whom common human sympathies are very strong. "*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*," should be the genuine voice of his heart. Not all industries require that virtue. Without it, we may conceive antiquaries, conveyancers, druggists, publicans, undertakers, all admirable practitioners in their respective branches of industry: but, without it, who can conceive a good doctor?

Such, gentlemen, in my opinion, are the qualifications by which to win the true prizes in our Profession: those, and to bear in mind the many noble examples of great and good men who have gone before us. I know of no conjuring-tricks that will bring round fortune to our side. Really to know what we profess to know, and to practise it with industry and as gentlemen, is the only road I can tell you to the only sort of success which I think worth having. That success I heartily wish you. To each and all of you I wish, that, in proportion as you have qualified yourselves for the very grave responsibilities of

practice, and in proportion as by skill and humanity you shall show yourselves worthy members of the Brotherhood into which you enter, you may succeed in the Profession to the very fulness of your hearts' desire, and that it may crown your lives with happiness and honour.

Mr. R. N. FOWLER.—Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been requested to propose a cordial vote of thanks to your distinguished Chairman for his presence here to-day. It is always the wish of the Council to secure on these occasions the presidency of eminent men; and we congratulate ourselves that on the present occasion we have been honoured by the presidency of one who for a long course of years filled the very important position of Medical Adviser to the Government, with great advantage to the Government. (Hear, hear.) But, gentlemen, we have not only to thank him for his presence here to-day, but for the most able address to which we have just listened. Before I sit down I must ask leave to express my concurrence in the words which fell from the Dean in regard to the great loss which this College has sustained in the death of my lamented friend Sir Francis Goldsmid. Having had the privilege for some twenty years of being his colleague on the Council, I can bear testimony that this College never had a more able or more devoted friend. Gentlemen, I beg to propose a vote of thanks to your distinguished Chairman.

Dr. BUCHANAN.—Ladies and Gentlemen, it falls to my lot to second this motion which has been put before you, and I feel that I need say nothing at all to commend it to you. Since I first had the privilege of sitting on these benches as one of your own number I have heard very many addresses from this Chair; but I have never heard one which seemed to me so appropriate, so worthy, so noble, as the one we have had the privilege of listening to to-day. (Applause.) Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not going to call up Mr. Simon's blushes by any further eulogy, but I beg you cordially, with the top of your voices, to give your very best thanks to Mr. Simon for his address.

[Carried by acclamation.]

The CHAIRMAN (in reply).—Ladies and Gentlemen, I have already detained you so very long that I feel it would be unreasonable to say more than that it is for me to give rather than to receive thanks, for I have had the greatest possible pleasure in attending here, and witnessing the very interesting ceremony of to-day. (Applause.)

